

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8253

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC CGEN UR (SANDBERG, JOEL AND ADELE)

SUBJECT: INTERROGATION OF AMCITS IN USSR

REF: STATE 128126

1. CONSOFF CALLED JUNE 11 ON MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS G.A. BOSIKOV AND V.G. KOVALENKO TO DELIVER NOTE PROTESTING SOVIET VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 12, SECTIONS 1, 2 AND 3 OF US-USSR CONSULAR CONVENTION WITH RESPECT TO INTERROGATION, INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION AND EXPULSION OF SANDBERGS (REFTEL AND PREVIOUS). EMBASSY NOTE BEING POUCHED EUR/SOV.

2. AFTER READING ONLY INITIAL PARAGRAPHS OF NOTE, BOSIKOV IN AGGRESSIVE TONE ASKED CONSOFF TO EXPLAIN REASON FOR SANDBERG'S DETENTION. CONSOFF REPLIED REASON HAD NOT BEEN EXPLAINED TO SANDBERGS AND COUPLE HAD NOT BEEN FORMALLY CHARGED WITH COMMISSION OF ANY CRIME. CONSOFF ADDED THAT ONE OF EMBASSY'S PRESENT REQUESTS WAS FOR EXPLANATION OF GROUNDS FOR DETENTION AND INTERROGATION. CONSOFF STATED THAT SANDBERGS WERE TOURISTS TRAVELLING UNDER INTOURIST AUSPICES FORCIBLY DETAINED WITHOUT FORMAL CHARGES AND SUGGESTED THAT "COMPETENT LOCAL ORGANS" WOULD BE IN BEST POSITION TO EXPLAIN WHY INCIDENT HAD OCCURRED.

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3. AFTER READING NOTE, BOSIKOV ASKED IN WHAT WAY

CONSULAR CONVENTION HAD BEEN VIOLATED. CONSOFF ANSWERED THAT DESPITE CITED ARTICLES OF CONVENTION, EMBASSY DID NOT RECEIVE REQUIRED IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION OF DETENTION AND SANDBERGS WERE DENIED RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE WITH EMBASSY WITHOUT DELAY. BOSIKOV AGREED TO INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENT BY "COMPETENT ORGANS". FURTHER, CONSOFF STRESSED NECESSITY THAT CONFISCATED ITEMS BE RETURNED TO COUPLE. BOSIKOV REPEATED THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE INVESTIGATED, ADDING IN AN ASIDE TO KOVALENKO THAT CONFISCATED INTOURIST VOUCHERS HAD PROBABLY BEEN "ANNULLED."

4. NOTING THAT INTOURIST WAS ACTIVELY ADVERTISING IN THE UNITED STATES TO ATTRACT TOURISTS TO THE SOVIET UNION, CONSOFF STATED HE BELIEVED INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE SANDBERGS' DETENTION WERE "UNNECESSARY" AND

HARMFUL TO DEVELOPING US-USSR RELATIONS. BOSIKOV EXPRESSED HIS AGREEMENT WITH POINT, BUT ADDED THAT OF THE "60,000" TOURISTS WHO HAD RECENTLY VISITED THE USSR, HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF ONE BECOMING INVOLVED IN SUCH AN INCIDENT. CONSOFF RESPONDED THAT HE ALSO WAS SADDENED OVER THE OCCURENECE, AND THEREFORE FELT IT ALL THE MORE IMPERATIVE THAT THE PRESENT CASE BE SATISFACTORILY INVESTIGATED AND RESTITUTION MADE FOR CONFISCATED ITEMS.
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